

Public Health Act, 1872.

ANNUAL REPORT

ON THE

Sanitary Condition

OF THE

BRADFORD-ON-AVON

URBAN SANITARY DISTRICT,

For the Year 1896.

PRESENTED TO THE

Bradford-on-Avon Urban District Council

BY

J. A. MULVILLE THOMSON,

M.O.H., F.Br.Inst.P.H., M.R.C.P.I.,

*Medical Officer of Health of the Bradford-on-Avon
Urban Sanitary Authority.*

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TABLE OF
DEATHS, arranged as to their CAUSES and AGES,
occurring in the
Urban District Council District of Bradford-on-Avon,
For the Year 1896.

Name of Disease.	Sex Totals.		Mortality from all causes, at subjoined Ages.												TOTAL.
	Males.	Females.	Under 1 Year.		1 and under 5		5 and under 15		15 and under 25		25 and under 65		65 and upwards.		
			M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
GROUP 1.—ZYMOTIC DISEASES:—															
Diarrhoea ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Whooping Cough ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
GROUP 2.—SEPTIC DISEASES:—															
Puerperal Fever ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Septicæmia ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Muco-Enteritis, Septicæmia ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
GROUP 3.—WASTING DISEASES:—															
Atrophy ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Mesenteric Disease ..	..	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Marasmus ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Phthisis ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	3	..	..	..	6
Tabes Mesenterica ..	..	3	1	3	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4
General Tuberculosis ..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	1
Total ..	..	7	5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
GROUP 4.—DISEASES WHERE NUTRITION IS INCREASED:—															
CARCINOMATA, &c.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cancer of Pylorus ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	1
Malignant Disease of Breast ..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Abdominal Tumour ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cancer of Uterus ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Malignant disease of Scapula ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Sarcoma ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cancer of Breast ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total ..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
GROUP 5.—NERVOUS SYSTEM:—															
Cerebral Meningitis ..	..	1	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	2
Apoplexy ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Spinal Disease ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Paraplegia ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Tubercular Meningitis ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Convulsions ..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Convulsions (Teething) ..	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Congestion of Brain ..	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Spinal Sclerosis ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Paralysis ..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	1
Softening of Brain ..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	1
Chronic Hydrocephalus ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Sanguineous Apoplexy ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Acute Encephalitis ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Paralysis Agitans ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total ..	..	5	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
GROUP 6.—CIRCULATORY SYSTEM:—															
Heart Disease ..	..	3	3	..	..	..	..	..	3	3	..	..	..	..	6
Total ..	..	3	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
GROUP 7.—ORGANS OF LOCOMOTION:—															
Acute Rheumatism ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Gout ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
GROUP 8.—VASCULAR ORGANS:—															
Addison's Disease ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Myxœdema ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Disease of Spleen ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Anæmia ..	..	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	..	..	..	..	2
Total ..	..	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
GROUP 9.—RESPIRATORY ORGANS:—															
Bronchitis ..	..	2	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	3	5
Broncho-Pneumonia ..	..	1	3	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	1
Pneumonia ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	3
Pleuro-Pneumonia ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Capillary Bronchitis ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Congestion of Lungs ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Acute Laryngitis ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Pleuritic Effusion ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Bronchial Asthma ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total ..	..	3	6	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
GROUP 10.—DIGESTIVE ORGANS:—															
Disease of Liver ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Chronic Colitis ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cirrhosis of Liver ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Peritonitis ..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	2
Enteritis ..	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	2
Total ..	..	2	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
GROUP 11.—GENITO-URINARY ORGANS:—															
Cystitis ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Chronic Bright's Disease ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Uremia ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Stricture of Urethra ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
GROUP 12.—PARTURITION:—															
Difficult Labour, Craniotomy ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
GROUP 13.—DEVELOPMENTAL DISEASES:—															
Debility from Birth ..	..	2	1	2	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3
Imperforate Anus ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Premature Birth ..	..	2	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Total ..	..	4	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
GROUP 14.—INQUESTS:—															
Bronchitis, Syncope ..	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	..	2
Weak Heart, Dropsy ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Drowned, Asphyxia, found dead ..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	3
Erysipelas following neglected wound ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Rupture of Vessel on the Brain ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Convulsions (Teething) ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Valvular Heart Disease, Syncope ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Epileptic Convulsions, caused by lead poisoning ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Fracture of leg, by being knocked down by an Engine ..	..	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Bronchial Catarrh ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Fatty and Dilated Heart, Syncope ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Syncope during an Epileptic Fit ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total ..	..	4	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
GROUP 15.—OLD AGE:—															
Senile and Natural Decay ..	..	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	..	3
Total ..	..	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total Number of Deaths	31	23	9	2	2	1	3	0	3	8	5	5	9	7	54

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH'S ANNUAL REPORT

TO THE

BRADFORD-ON-AVON

Urban District Council,

For the Year 1896.

GENTLEMEN,

The General Orders of the Local Government Board require that I should, as your Medical Officer of Health, prepare and present to you, as the Urban Council, a yearly report upon the state of the Public Health in your district, and its general sanitary condition, and to include in that report such practical suggestions as may occur to me as your Health Officer.

In accordance with those orders I now beg to submit that last year we reached the lowest death-rate since 1880, The total number (54, or 10·4 per 1,000,) has fallen 12 below that of the previous year, which then held the record, while the birth-rate has risen from 21·1 per thousand in 1895 to 23·2 last year. This is hopeful, but the birth-rate in the Urban district is yet much below what it ought to be, having fallen in 10 years from 32·2 in 1886 to 23·2 last year. It is, fortunately, no part of my duty to offer any suggestions on this question, not coming directly under the heading of Public Health, but while on the subject I may incidentally mention that the Rural district has in some degree come to the rescue, as they nearly doubled their annual output last year.

During last year a total of 54 deaths from all causes were registered, 31 males and 23 females, which is very considerably below the average throughout the English Urban districts, where 18·2 is registered against our 10·4, and is the lowest rate reached, as far as I can ascertain, for 17 years.

Of these 54 deaths no less than 21 were over 70 years of age, while the average was 50·1, and the aggregate 2,701 years. The death-rate for the 33 great towns was last year 21·2, ours 10·4; the birth-rate 30·5, ours 23·2. In the first quarter there were :—

35 Births and 20 Deaths.				
2nd,	30	„	13	„
3rd,	27	„	11	„
4th,	24	„	10	„
	—		—	
	116		54	

By this table you will perceive that the first quarter was the most productive and likewise the most fatal, that both the births and deaths decreased quarter by quarter, and that during the last quarter of 1896 there was less business done in either department than I can find any record of.

Below will be found a tabular statement illustrating the fall in both rates for the preceding 11 years :—

1886	...	162	Births or 32·2	against	101	Deaths or 20·7
1887	...	148	„	29·3	„	98
1888	...	140	„	28·1	„	82
1889	...	137	„	27·2	„	95
1890	...	144	„	28·4	„	81
1891	...	114	„	22·4	„	91
1892	...	111	„	22·2	„	82
1893	...	127	„	25·2	„	80
1894	...	124	„	24·4	„	70
1895	...	105	„	21·0	„	66
1896	...	116	„	23·2	„	54

representing a fall in the birth-rate of 11·2 per cent., and in the death-rate of 10·3 during the past 11 years, while in the Rural district, with an almost similar population, the deaths reached 55, or one more, with an aggregate of 3,053, an average of 55·1 years each, and one more coincidence, during nearly 9 weeks last early summer no deaths occurred in your district.

It may interest the Council to be informed of the causation of mortality :—

Infantile illnesses, including premature births	10
Brain diseases	4
Cancer	3
Bronchitis	8
Cardiac diseases	6
Intestinal diseases	4
Pneumonia	3
Phthisis	6
Epilepsy	2
Senile decay	5
Drowned in Avon	2
Run over by Locomotive	1
	54

It will doubtless be observed with satisfaction by all those who take an intelligent interest in such matters, that there has been a steady and uniform decline in all diseases of the respiratory organs, which were formerly by far the most common and fatal maladies in this locality, pointing, I should imagine, to an improved drainage and more sanitary dwellings. As a matter of fact, the mortality from such diseases has decreased by more than half during the past 10 years, and must go on decreasing, seeing the vast improvement in the housing and surroundings of the so-called working classes which has taken place of late years in this district.

We were happily spared anything in the shape of an epidemic last year, and not one single death was reported from zymotic diseases.

There were only 3 cases of zymotic disease notified to me officially last year, against 15 in 1895 and 26 in 1894, which compares more than favourably with the Rural district, where the total number was 52, principally measles and scarlet fever.

The pollution of what ought to be our beautiful river Avon still proceeds most effectually, nor does there seem to be much, if any, public feeling in the matter. Most of the residents appear to regard it with indifference, having apparently become habituated to its foulness from birth.

I have in years past advocated a scheme of drainage, or at least the completion of your scheme, and that is a matter

which must, sooner or later, come within the category of practical business, and I trust that when it does your Council will be guided to reject any scheme which does not provide for the reception of its sewage elsewhere than in the river, or if it must be there, let it at least be carried to a point below Barton Bridge, but of course any action on your part would be to a great extent frustrated unless the co-polluting towns above did likewise.

The new and commodious schools which have been erected by the liberality of the town are a vast improvement on the old ones, and seem to combine everything tending to contribute to the health and sanitary surroundings of the children.

With reference to the much debated isolation hospital, I hope the scheme whereby the contiguous towns of Trowbridge and Melksham will combine with your Council and provide one central hospital, by which means much greater efficiency and economy would result.

The staple industries of your town are the manufacture of beer, rubber, and cloth, neither of which several occupations appears to have any deleterious effect upon the health of the workers, and do not, so far as my observations go, give rise to any specific diseases.

I have on various occasions examined into the sanitary conditions existing in the several factories, and there is no fault to find with them.

The burial grounds are in a satisfactory condition. One of them, unfortunately, is situated immediately on the top of the town, and for this reason, having in view the fact that it drains right down through the town to the long-suffering river, I should like to see all the wells on the north side closed up.

The slaughter-houses, so far as their structurally imperfect condition allows, and the bakehouses are in a proper state of cleanliness.

The water supply, which is obtained from springs at Avoncliffe (about two miles west of the town), which rise at the junction of the inferior oolite formations, has been of good average quality and quantity, and the supply has been constant. The geographical formation of the strata is at the junction of

the cretaceous and surassic formations, with a subsoil of sandstone, the physical features being very hilly and well drained by the river Avon.

The several analyses I have from time to time made of the water, have yielded a satisfactory result.

Up to the date of your late Surveyor's breakdown in health, we had regularly inspected all the slaughter-houses, bake-houses, public sewers, and lodging-houses, and found nothing to report, although we made various suggestions and gave several warnings.

There have been 11 inquests during the year, which is above the average.

In my humble opinion, Public Baths and Washhouses ought to exist in this as in every other manufacturing town. They would conduce to an improved moral and physical condition of the people, and ought to be self-supporting, and now that the town appears to be in a building mood, having just completed its handsome Technical and Church Schools and Public Urinal, it appears to me that it could not fitly celebrate the diamond jubilee of the Queen more appropriately than by the erection of such Baths by public subscription.

Attached to my report is a statistical table and a summary of work done during the year.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

MULVILLE THOMSON,

M.O.H., and F. M. Inst. Public Health.

